

## Company Spotlight



The recreational vehicle industry was among the hardest hit during the recession that began in 2008 and Howe-based Cruiser RV certainly wasn't immune to the challenges.

But President Jeff Fought said the fast-paced, family-owned business never faltered. And now, through strategic management and a recent expansion, the manufacturer of lightweight RVs is expecting annual revenue to grow from \$75 million to \$100 million in the next two years.

Helping spur the company's growth, Fought said, is an adept, dedicated workforce of more than 200 employees and strong support from local and state economic development officials.



President Jeff Fought

Cruiser employees are a mix of Amish and non-Amish, and Fought said the employees possess a strong work ethic: "They're just good workers. They're hard workers."

Meanwhile, the LaGrange County Economic Development Corp. and state officials have assisted Cruiser, including providing incentives so the company could add a new, fully-equipped plant in LaGrange in 2012.

### The Company File

Cruiser RV LLC

Year Founded: 2003

Locations: Howe and LaGrange

Annual Revenue: \$75 million

Employees: More than 200

Facility Sizes: Howe, 100,000 square feet;

LaGrange, 125,000 square feet



Fun Finder lightweight travel trailers await final touches on the production floor at Cruiser RV.

### Deciding LaGrange County Factors:

- Strong workforce
- Proximity to toll road and interstates
- Support from local officials

Fought said the company was initially reluctant to accept the help, leaning instead toward the values of self-reliance: "We never really felt like we were people looking for a handout. We've never been that kind of company."

But in the end, he said, the assistance was critical to Cruiser's continued growth: "It just sort of clicked for us. It was, 'OK, these sorts of programs make sense.' They're helping us. We're helping the community."

Cruiser produces more than 4,000 units a year, distributes products mainly in the U.S., and is poised to expand a promising market in Australia.

"We feel like we're really supported here."

"We continue to see a growth curve in front of us," Fought said. "We have three different projects on the table right now to continue that growth forward. And we like doing business in LaGrange County. I was raised here. This has been our home. We feel like we're really supported here."

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